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BAPTISTS

# Seeking spac

NYC churches struggle to find places to gather for worship

NEW YORK (BP) - A New York City pastor says a recent ban on churches meeting in schools, though troubling for constitutional and practical reasons, is an unprecedented occasion for believers to demonstrate the love of Christia.

"I personally believe this is "I personally believe this is the beginning of great things that God wants to do in New York," Ray Parascando, pastor of Crossroads Church in Staten Island, N.Y., told Baptist Press (BP). "I think this is not a setback. This is a major opportunity for the church to strengthen within as people kind of rally together and depend on God like never before and to renew and reignite our passion to

like never before and to renew and reignite our passion to reach the city like never before."

Effective Feb. 12, the New York City Department of Education is banning the use of public schools by religious organizations, citing a need to protect the minds of "impressionable youth."

"There's such a need for the church to step out, not in

"There's such a need for the church to step out, not in a rallying sense but in a loving sense," Parascando said.

Crossroads Church, a Southern Baptist congregation founded in 2002, has been meeting in the Public School 52 auditorium for more than four years averaging 250 peoperations 250 peop four years, averaging 250 peo-ple in worship on Sundays. If the ban is not reversed, the church will have to transition

to another meeting space.
"As of now, we're hoping to lease an abandoned movie theater, but we're still waiting for the final paperwork to go through," Parascando said. "Right now we're still up in the air.

Finding appropriate space for church to meet in New York City is extremely difficult, Parascando said.

"If you're looking for an apartment for a family of four, you can find that," he said, but finding a space for 250 people is a different story, especially when appropriate

space for children is needed. oing children's ministry in a eater "is going to stifle us a

theater "is going to stifle us a bit, so we're going to need to be creative," he said.

Crossroads Church has a good relationship with the Department of Education as a whole, Ramscando said, thanks in part to a Southern Baptist initiative called Paint the Town.

Crossroads Church has helped paint 16 public schools in all live boroughs, including the borough in which they meet.

"We do a sports camp in the summer that's free for the community. We do a Friday after school program," he said. "There are a lot of things we do in the community, so

we do in the community, so the school loves us because

The ban on churches meeting in schools, Parascando said, is a bad idea in several ways. For one, it's unconstitutional, he pointed out. "You can't say that a soccer team can use the school but a church can't. You school but a church can't. You can't say Girl Scouts can meet there but the church can't. It's unconstitutional to single out one group over another. It's just not right, "he said."

"If it was done to any other "If it was done to any other faith, for example if this was happening to Muslims, this would be a major national issue. There would be major push back on it," Parascando said, "but because it's the Christian church, it's labeled as, 'They're just try-ing to get something for free."

A New York Times opinion

piece contained misinformation, he said, when the writer portrayed churches as using public schools for free. Instead, churches pay between \$1,500 and \$2,000 per month to meet in the schools, which Parascando said is a fair price for the churches and "a nice extra flow of income" for the city.

"Economically, it doesn't make sense for the city of New York to do this," Parascando said. "They cry about their lack of budget to pay teachers.



EVICTED — Crossroads Church, a Southern Baptist congregation in Staten Island, N.Y., has been meeting in the Public School 52 auditorium for more than four years. If a recent New York City ban on churches meeting in public schools is not reversed, Crossroads will have to transition to another meeting space effective Feb. 12. (BP photo)

They cut the custodial budget every year. ...This is bringing money into the system."

More importantly, the pastor said, New York's ban sends a message that this sort of regulation is acceptable. He fears that this will serve as a precedent for further restricting churches' access to public facilities as well as for school boards in other states adopting the rule for their districts.

"I know God has a plan no matter what, and when people try to persecute, God's going to use it for promotion," Parascando said. "When people accuse and try to discredit, God's going to use it to do more. He's doing that, but it concerns me as a that, but it concerns me as a Christian and as an American that our rights are being manipulated this way."

He hopes the ban will be reversed but if not, Crossroads will comply. "We're going to leave. We're not going to march or any-thing like that. The 12th is the last day we can be there, and then that's it. We don't agree with it, but we'll have to abide by it as good citizens.

"We're going to go one even better than that. Knowing all of this, we will still paint the schools this summer because we care about the children, we care about the faculty, we care about the Department of Education and what they're about, so even though don't agree with a lot of their decisions, especially this reg-ulation, we still want to min-ister in the love of Jesus Christ by serving," he said.



## EDITOR'S **NOTEBOOK**

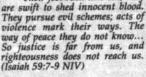
## The Sad Anniversary, 39th replay

The past Sunday marked the 39th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision legalizing the wanton destruction of human life in every state in America for the entire nine months of gestation.

Like every other year, pro-choicers marched in favor of abortion on demand, pro-lifers marched against it, and inno-

cent blood cuatinued to be shed. The last part of that state-ment is the most important innocent blood continues to be shed. In the middle of the constant arguing, political maneu-vering, moral posturing, and bitler recriminations, innocent blood continues to be shed. Surely that's the part that so rightfully angers God:

Their feet rush into sin; they are swift to shed innocent blood.



 There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart tongue, names that sheet innocent broods, a neur-that devises wicked schemes, feet that are quick to rush into evil, a false witness who pours out-lies and a person who stirs up conflict in the community. (Proverbs 6:17-19 NIV)

ongregations across America call pastors to

their churches in a variety of ways. As church polity

varies, so do the approaches of calling a pastor. A bishop or other authority appoints some pastors. Sometimes an elder board decides who will be considered as the next pas-

Many times, however, the responsibility for recom-mending a pastor to a congre-gation falls upon a pastor search committee. The search

committee is typically com-prised of lay leaders voted on

by the congregation or nomi-nated by some group in the church. Occasionally, the

church. Occasionally, the membership may include a current pastoral staff member. It is this latter approach, the utilization of a pastor search committee, which I

would like to address in this

When a pastor is contacted by a search committee, his life

is often disrupted. Even if he has no sense of call to change churches, the very fact that a search committee contacted

him at least causes him to

pause. In some cases the contact is very disruptive to his life and ministry.

For that reason, pastors

have shared with me a num-

ber of requests (and some-times pleas) that they would respectfully ask search com-

They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to false gods. They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sac-rificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was desecrated by their blood. (Psalm 106:37-38 NIV)

Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me. (Mark 9:37 NIV)

If anyone causes one of these little ones those who believe in me — to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea. (Mark 9:42 NIV)

Yet there are those who proudly celebrate the shedding of innocent blood from the more than 50 million U.S. abor-

tions over the last 39 years.

"As we mark the 39th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, we must remember that this Supreme Court decision not only protects a woman's health and reproductive freedom, but also affirms a broader principle: that government should not intrude on private family matters," said U.S. President Barack Obama in an official statement from The White House.

"I remain committed to protecting a woman's right to choose and this funda-mental constitutional right. While this is a sensitive and often divisive issue - no matter what our views, we must stay united in our determination to prevent unintended pregnancies, support pregnant woman and mothers, reduce the need for abortion, encourage healthy relationships, and promote adoption," he went on to say. "And as we remember this historic

anniversary, we must also continue our efforts to ensure that our daughters have the same rights, freedoms, and opportunities as our sons to fulfill their dreams," he concluded.

he concluded.

In his chilling novel, 1984, the late George Orwell correctly predicted the advance of "Newspeak," or the art of removing all shades of meaning from words. While the President holds up legalized infanticide as a glorious victory for womanhood, health, and freedom, he also expresses his desire to "reduce the need for abortion ... and promote adoption." Well, which is it, Mr. President?

Equally as preposterous is the notion that Mr. Obama doesn't want government to intrude on "private family matters" — this from the man whose Obamacare universal health coverage is compiling individual's personal medical records into a massive government database and forcing religious groups to offer contraceptives free of charge to all employees, regardless of a group's estab-lished moral stance on that issue.

Finally, Obama applauds abortion for providing to our daughters "the same rights, freedoms, and opportunities as our sons to fulfill their dreams." Apparently abortion is, above all, the Great Gender Equalizer, but what does that sentence really mean?

Mr. Orwell, be still in your grave.

EDITOR William H. Perkins Jr. wperkins@mbcb.org

William H.

Perkins Jr.

Editor

ASSOCIATE EDITOR Tony Martin tmartin@mbcb.org

LAYOUT/DESIGN

Emily Jones

CIRCULATION MANAGER Brenda Quattlebaum

EDITOR EMERITUS Don McGregor

**Baptist Record Advisory Committee** Archie Herrin, Columbia Chris Webb, Jackson Sharon Neff, Cleveland John Price, Charleston Dwayne Parker, Flora Paul Sims, Pontotoc

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Fax: (601) 292-3330 E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org

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## GUEST SPINION:



## Conduct search appropriate way

· By Thom S. Ranier, president LifeWay Christian Resources Nashville

 Understand the potential disruption caused by your contact of a pastor. Most pastors at least pause and pray when they hear from another church. They often include their spouses in the early dis-cussion. They may wonder if the contact is indicative that God may be leading them to another place of ministry.

If a search committee contacts a pastor, at least be aware of the disruption that could take place. Perhaps it's not best to send 200 inquiry letters to 200 different pastors

 Have a clear plan for the process of calling a pastor. Let the contected pastor know that plan on the front end so he won't be left wondering what the next steps are.

Prepare any questions before you contact the pastor. I have heard from many pas-tors who meet in person with

the search committee, as well as those who first communi-cate via phone or Skype. They are often frustrated at the randomness of questions asked, and how different members of the search committee don't know what the other members will ask.

 Do your homework thoroughly before showing up in the pastor's present church. Many congregations recog-nize a search committee immediately when they attend a worship service. These church members soon become worried, frustrated or angry at either the pastor or the inquiring church.

The presence of a search committee can be highly disruptive. Many pastors do not even know that a committee is visiting his church. He, too, is caught off guard.

Communicate regularly and clearly with the prospec-

tive pastor. As long as the process is open, stay in touch with the pastor. Many times the greatest frustration is the lack of communication. One pastor recently told me that he resolved not to talk further with a church because he had not heard from them in such a long time. He assumed that they had moved in another direction. The search commit-tee was shocked when they heard that information from the pastor several months

 If the search committee decides to move in another direction, let the pastor know immediately. A courtesy call, even an e-mail, will always be appreciated even if the committee concludes that the pastor is not a fit for the church.

Many pastors have told me that they thought they were still under consideration, only to discover sometimes later that the church had called

There is no perfect way to call a pastor to a church. Regardless of church polity, mistakes and miscommunication will take place but these suggestions by pastors who have been contacted by search committees could

prove very helpful.

At the very least, they could help minimize frustration and disruption in the lives of pastors and the churches they serve.

mittees to consider:

## Feds demanding abortion drugs coverage

## Obama administration forcing groups to include provision for abortifacients

"All women should

- Nancy Keenan

NARAL Pro-Choice America

WASHINGTON (BP) — The bama administration has rejected appeals to overturn guidelines requiring health insurance plans to cover chemical and hormonal agents that can cause abortions, adversely affecting religious groups that have eschewed such coverage on pro-life grounds.

In its Jan. 20 announcement Friday, the administration also refused to expand what critics say is a too-narrow exemption for religious institutions opposed

to providing birth control under preven-tive services.

U.S The Department of Health and have access to conand H u m a n Services (HHS) did make one concession: It traceptive coverage, regardless of where they work ... The will grant an extra year for compliance with the rule to administration stood firm against intensive n o n p r o f i t employers who presently refuse lobbying efforts from anti-birth-control to cover contraorganizations trying ceptives in their to expand the refusal option ..."

ceptives in their insurance plan because of their religious beliefs. Those employers will have until Aug. 1, 2013, to abide by the require-ment. The rule goes into effect Aug. 1 of this

year for most other health plans.
Pro-life and religious freedom advocates decried the Obama administration's latest decision and found no solace in the one-year delay.

The announcement by HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius followed months of protests followed months of protests against an interim final rule issued Aug. 1 of last year. Under that guideline, HHS said the controversial 2010 health-care reform law — titled the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act but dubbed "Obamacare" by its critics — would require health plans and insurers to provide no-cost coverage of contraceptives, including those with abortion-inducing properties. Sebelius said Friday she

believes HHS' approach "strikes the appropriate balance between respecting reli-gious freedom and increasing access to important preventive services.

Critics of the rule and the religious exemption did not agree. They say the religious exemption provided in the rule will not protect the conscience rights of such faith-based organizations as schools, hospitals, and social service programs — and

"This is bad news for freedom of conscience and for respect for the freedom of religion protections guaranteed in the American Constitution," said Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Baptist Commission

"Secretary Sebelius is stating that people who have religious

convictions against contraceptives or particular types of contraceptives that are abortifacients (cause abortions) will have a one-year reprieve before they will be forced to pay for health insurance for that which they find unconscionable.

"It's analogous to giving a man on death row a one-year stay of execu-tion. You can follow your conscience for one more year. This is outrageous and I am sure it will lead many people to hope and to pray that there

will be a new secretary of Health and Human Services and a new administration to provide a reprieve from this squelching of conscience before the deadline arrives."

Under the new rule, all methods approved as contra-ceptives by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will be included in a range of services offered to patients free of charge. Those FDA-endorsed contraceptives include ones that have the ability to cause abortions — emergency con-traception, such as Plan B; the intrauterine device (IUD), and "ella." Emergency contracep-tion is also known as the "morning-after" pill. Timothy Dolan, Roman

Catholic archbishop of New York and president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, said, "In effect, the president is saying we have a year to figure out how to violate our con-sciences. To force American citizens to choose between violating their consciences and forgoing their healthcare is literally unconscionable. It is as much an attack on access to health care as on religious freedom.'

The Becket Fund for Religious Liberty has already filed lawsuits against the rule on behalf of Colorado Christian University and Belmont Abbey College in

Hannah Smith, the Becket Fund's senior legal counsel, called the one-year delay by HHS

'a shamel attempt to kick the can down the road in an election year. Religious colleges, universies, and hospitals will never pay for abortion drugs in viola-tion of their religious beliefs — this year or any other year."

Abortion rights organizations — such as NARAL Pro-Choice America and Planned Parenthood applauded the announcement.

"All women should have access to contra-

ceptive coverage, regardless of where they work," NARAL President Nancy Keenan said in a written release. "The administration stood firm against intensive lobbying efforts from anti-birth-control organizations trying to expand the refusal option even further to allow organizations and corporations to deny their employees contra-

ceptive coverage."

Emergency contraception is basically a heavy dose of birth control pills. While the normally two-step process can restrict ovulation in a woman or prevent fertilization, it also can block implantation of the early embryo in the uterine wall. The latter effect would cause an abortion, pro-life advocates point out. An intrauterine device (IUD) also can prevent implantation.
"Ella," though approved as

emergency contraception by the FDA in 2010, is more closely related to the abortion drug RU 486, according to pro-life organiPro-life Obstetricians and Gynecologists says. "Ella' also block can

"This is bad news for freedom of conscience and for respect for the freedom of religion protections guaranteed in the American Constitution."

- Richard Land president Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention

production of the hormone progesterone, destroying the placenta that provides nutrition to the embryo and causing the tiny, unborn child's death, the American Association of

> implantation.
> While opposition to the sition to the rule has been portrayed as portrayed as primarily Catholic in its origin, Land and other evang e l i c a l Christians also have strongly protested. In December, Land joined 60 others almost entirely evangelical Christians, plus two Jewish leaders letter President Obama affirm-ing they are

deeply con-the "contracepcerned about the "contracep-tive mandate," as it has become known, and its weak exemption for religious employers.

During a public comment period provided by HHS, Land protested in a Sept. 30 submission the use of taxpayer funds in support of abortion drugs and the violations of religious liberty and freedom of conscience in the guidelines.

In his September com-ments, Land pointed to Southern Baptists' longstanding support for the sanc-tity of human life and religious freedom. He cited 11 resolutions opposing abortion that were passed at Southern Baptist Convention annual meetings from 1980 to 2011.

He also referenced the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message, which says human life begins at "conception." The convention has approved numerous resolutions backing expansive religious liberty protections, most recently in 2005 and 2011, Land said.

## Looking back

For the first time, a group of Baptist "moderates" heads toward breaking away from a state convention to form its own convention, with a meeting planned for Apr. 18 - 19 in the Fee Fee Church, St. Louis.

According to a recent editorial in The Baptist Record, not everyone needs a computer. If your church doesn't keep records, purchase a bulletin, or if the pastor is not interested in producing better sermons or Bible studies, then a computer becomes an expensive paperweight, the newspaper states

Subscriptions to the Greater Clarke College Expansion Program go to a total of \$631,656.15 as of the final report from Jan. 21. This includes \$120,000 from the Cooperative Program during 1961-65



## BAPTISTS

## THE SECOND FRONT FAGE

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YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT Now!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

- 1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
- 2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
- 3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
- 4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual quidance.



BN UPIWTG, LWXRW
VPKT IWTB BT, XH VGTPITG IWPC PAA; PCS CD
BPC XH PQAT ID EAJRZ
IWTB DJI DU BN UPIWTG'H WPCS.

YDWC ITC: ILTCIN-CXCT

Clue: U = F

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle color trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Luke Ten: Twenty

### Cancellation

The Transitional
Pastor Training scheduled
for Feb. 6 – 8, 2012, at
Thirty-Eighth Avenue
Church, Hattiesburg, has
been cancelled.

#### PASTOR APPRECIATION

For years the month of February has been designated as Pastor Appreciation Month. While there are other times throughout the year when you could express your appreciation to your pastor, this is a wonderful opportunity for not only the church to bless him but also to bless yourself through strengthening the relationship in expressing your care for his ministry. While some churches go to great lengths to show their appreciation for their shepherd during this month, some choose other opportunities and occasions to say, "Thank you!" It may be his birthday, his anniversary as pastor, maybe Christmas, or some other event. Some try to do something for all of these, while the reality is that nothing is required.

Being a pastor is no easy task. While the pastor may have a clear sense of a call from God and even a confidence in what God would have him to do and the way He would have him to do it, virtually everyone in the congregation and probably in the community has their own sense of what he should be doing, when, and how he should go about doing it. It is not easy and, in fact, it is impossible to meet all of those expectations. If the pastor messes up, which given enough time and opportunione. If he is too aggressive, he is dictatorial. If he is a caring, consensus builder, he may be criticized for not being a leader. If he is a gifted and strong pulpiteer, he may be criticized for not being pastoral enough. If he spends most of his time connecting with the people, visiting in the homes, and going to all the events, he may be criticized for not spending enough time in the Word.

While there are no perfect pastors, the Lord's servants called and gifted and often doing their absolute best to serve God's people are worthy of honor and expressions of appreciation. Paul writes to Timothy in his first letter to the young preacher and says that those elders who are leading the people and especially in the things of the Word are worthy of double honor (I Tim. 5:17). During the month of February let me encourage you to try to find some way either corporately as a church or individually just out of the impulses of your own heart to express your appreciation and your care for your pastor. What can you do? Here are three simple thoughts that I would ask you to consider.

(1) Focus — I have had people to tell me and folks to even write and say well our



Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

pastor is not worthy of honor or expressions of appreciation. I have had people to say things like well he never shows us any appreciation so why should we show him any. You may be right, but maybe on the other hand you have the opportunity to show and express appreciation. It is an interesting thing to watch as criticism seems to beget criticism and blessings seem to give birth to blessings. When I say focus I want to encourage you to look at his giftedness rather than his shortcomings. Focus on his devotion rather than his deficiencies. See his blessings more than his blunders.

(2) Find — Search for ways to express appreciation. The list could be endless. I have known of churches that gave various Sunday School classes throughout the church a day in the month of February to do something nice for the pastor. It could be children's classes who drew pictures and expressed kindness to their pastor and senior adult groups who found ways to let the pastor and his family know of their gratitude. But regardless of what anyone else does, you can find something to do. I have encouraged people from to time to time to write anonymous notes or letters to the pastor. I am not talking about those kind of mean spirited, angry, and hurtful anonymous let-

ters, but take time to write one flooding him with kindness. It may be difficult for you to do because you may want to say some things about some personal experiences where a word helped you, a call lifted you, or the pastor walked with you through a dark valley. You may not be able to remain anonymous. That is fine, but you can find ways to let him know that his ministry is affecting your walk with the Lord in a glorious way.

(3) Follow — We live in an age where independence from any rule or anyone else's thought or influence is praised to the high heavens. We struggle to follow someone and we detest having to obey someone. The writer of Hebrews says concerning the leadership within the congregations of God, "Obey them that have the rule over you and submit yourselves for they watch for your souls as they must give an account" (Heb. 13:17). The pastor needs around him and undergirding him as a part of his work people who have a spirit to follow Christ and recognize that Christ is at work in him.

It is so many of those men and women who did not just act as rubber stamps for everything that I wanted to do in the church but saw that the Lord was guiding me and came alongside of me to make my ministry meaningtive. For those who followed me when I knew what I was doing and where I was going. I am grateful. For those who followed me when I was stumbling along, seeking the will of God, and wanting to do what the Lord had in store for not only me but for all of us, you blessed me. For those of you who followed when neither you nor I had a clue as to what we were doing except we wanted to do what Jesus wanted us to do, I thank you and praise God for you.

ful and at times more effec-

Someone has suggested that being a pastor and leading a congregation is like trying to straddle a mud puddle with a wheelbarrow. For sure, it is a difficult task and a glorious work. Take some time this February and help honor your pastor as together you accomplish the task for the Lord.

The author can be contacted at jfutral@mbcb.org.

#### MS Positions

PASTOR: VICTORY BAPTIST CHURCH IN MATHISTON, MS IS SEEKING RESUMES FOR A PASTOR. Mail to: Victory Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, P. O. Box 12, Mathiston, MS 39752. MT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH IN

MT. ZION BAPTIST CHURCH IN INDEPENDENCE, MISSISSIPPI IS SEEKING A PART-TIME MUSIC WORSHIP LEADER. Contact Dr. Jef Elliot at revidehiot@hotmail.com or

COUNTY LINE BAPTIST CHURCH IN RANKIN COUNTY IS SEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY. Email any questions or resume to kspungee@bellsouth.net or mail to CLBC Youth Ministry, 1353 County Line Rd., Mendenhall, Ms. 39114. Compensation pkg., based on experience and/or ability is negotiable and could also include housing.

GALILEE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH.

GALILEE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, GLOSTER, MS. IS SEEKING A PAS-TOR. Please send resume's to Galilee First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 118, Gloster, Ms., 39638. Attention: Pastor Seach Committee.

Pastor Search Committe.
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39059 or e-mail to

newzionb@gmail.com.
UNION HALL BAPTIST CHURCH,
BROOKHAVEN, MS IS SEKING A
PART-TIME YOUTH DIRECTOR.
Resumes may be mailed to the
church at: 1242 Nola Road N. E.,
Brookhaven, MS 39601 Attention:
Youth Director Search Committee.
CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH IN
BROOKHAYEN, MS, IS SERING A
PART-TIME MINISTER OF CHILDREN
AND YOUTFI. Resumes may be emailed
to questions@cbcbrookhaven.org
or mailed to P.O. Box 591, Brookhaven,
MS 36602.

mailed to P.O. Box 591, Brookhaven, MS, 39602. INTERSTATE BAPTIST CHURCH IN SHAW, MS IS SEEKING A FULL TIME PASTOR. Send resumes to: John Chouccoli, 947 Sandpit Road, Shaw, Ms.

cableone.net
INTERSTATE BAPTIST CHURCH IN
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MINISTER OF MUSIC. Please send
remains to john Chouccoli, 947 Sandpit
Road, Shaw, Ms. 38773 or email to:
jchouccoli@cableone.net.

#### CLASSIFIED And

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ONE PULPIT AND FOUR PULPIT
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# HOUSE TOPS.

January 26, 2012

House Tops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

## Pray this day for...

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven ...

For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Matthew 6:19-21

Pray for. Aaron\* and Tiffany Epps, IMB missionaries ministering to American Peoples in Brazil through church and home outreach and evangelism.

Pray for: Benton\* and Ramona Hewitt, IMB mis sionaries ministering to Sul Saharan African Peoples in the United Stales through medical missions, church and home outreach and evangelism. Pray for: Robert\* and Margaret Fortenberry, IMB missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples in Botswana through church and home outreach and evangelism.

Pray for. Raymond\* and Cynthia Hodgins, IMB missionaries ministering to Deaf Peoples in the United States through sports evan gelism, church and home outreach and evangelism. Pray for. Megan Fraiser\*, IMB missionary ministering to Southeast Asian Peoples in the United States through community outreach and encounter evangelism.

Pray for: Jeffery\* and Llesa\* Hoteman, IMB missionaries, misstering to American Peoples in Peru through community, church and home outreach and encounter evangelism. Pray for: David\* and Gloria\* Glaze, IMB missionaries ministering to Deaf Peoples in the United States through media consultation and promotion.

Pray for: Janet Holloway, \* IMB missionary ministering to Europea Peoples in Russia through student evangelism. Pray for: John\* and Sonia\* Grady, IMB missionaries ministering to American Peoples in the United States through church and home outreach and evangelism.

Pray for. Daniel and Claudia\* Hood, IMB missonaries ministering to Subsonarian African Peoples in Kenya through church and home outreach and evangelism.

Jan. 27 — Feb. 9, 2012

Pray for: Thomas\* and Kerrl Dewett, IMB missionaries ministering to American Peoples in the Dominican Republic through church and home outreach and evangelism.

Pray for Clarence Frank and Phoebe\* Harrison, IMB missionaries ministering to American Peoples in Honduras through church planting, church and home outreach and evangelism. Pray for: Alvin and Mary\* Doyle, IMB missionaries ministering to European Peoples in Hungary as they serve other missionaries through member care.

Pray for: Brian\* and Felicia\* Henderson, IMB missionaries ministering to American Peoples in Peru through chuirch and home outreach and evangelism, and serving through regional office support.

\*These International Mission Board missionaries claim Mississippi as their home state. The IMB missionaries listed in the HouseTops prayer calendar are currently active in 24 year terms or in career service.



2012 Senior Leadership Lab

February 7
Garaywa Camp and Conference Center
9:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Choose from lab sessions centered around: Grandparent Bible Storytelling; Remembering the Life of Jesus (for any stage of domentia); Developing a Model for Homebound; Single-Senior Ministry

Cost: \$10, includes lunch and handouts

Register for the Leadership Lab by February 1. Mail payment to: MBCB, Attn: Glenn Shows, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205 [OR Pay \$5 at the door, lunch not included]. Lodging at Garaywa — 601-924-7034-

## LEGAL ISSUES CONFERENCE

February 20, 2012

Place: X-Tended Missions Network

office, Hernando

Time: 7 p.m.

Purpose: Provide

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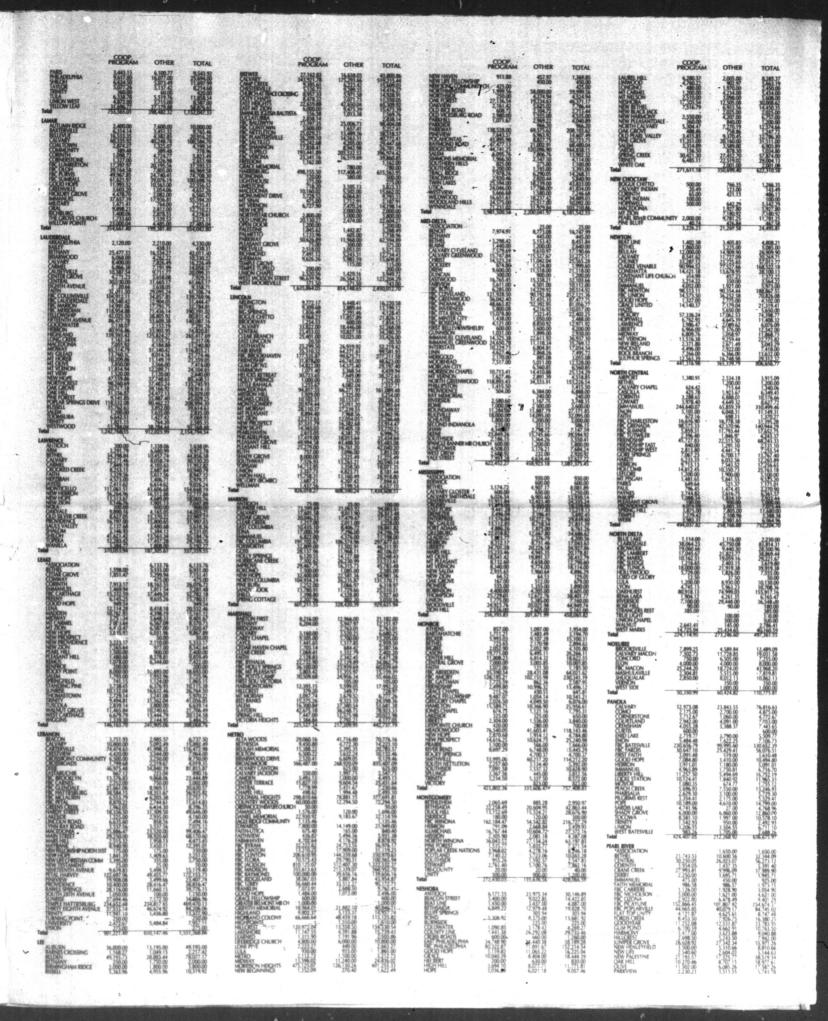
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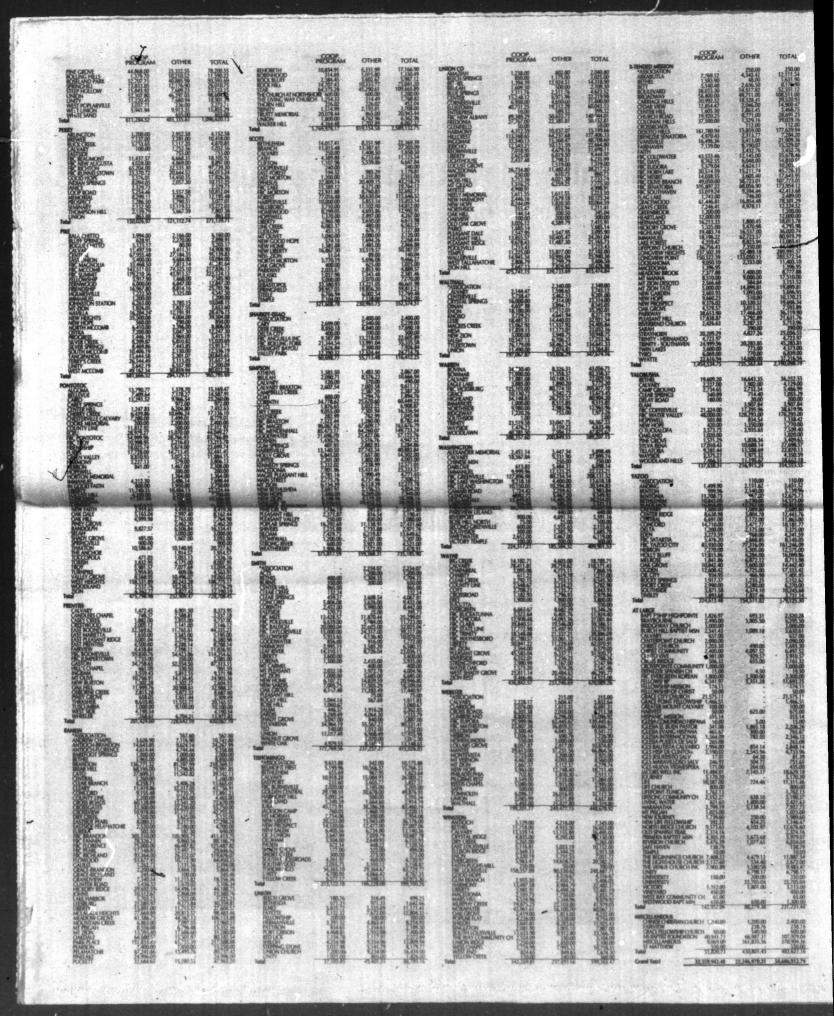
Preregistration is

requested

to provide adequate materials by e-mailing cwtaylor@mbcb.org.

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## PRACTICAL PRINCIPLES for Christian Living

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## 'Nothing New Under The Sun'

By Jimmy Porter Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission

"It is a new day and will be better nevery way," stated a Mississippi citzen after the Republican Party gained ontrol of the Senate, House and Governor's office. Probably it would be better said that the GOP gained the eadership roles because I am not sure anyone at anytime has control of verything that happens at the apitol. But, for sure, the epublicans have an opportunity to

epublicans have an opportunity to epup and lead. The key personnel in the legislative ocess are Governor Phil Bryant, Lt. overnor Tate Reeves, President Prom of the Senate Terry Brown, eaker of the House Philip Gunn and eaker Pro Tem Greg Snowden. which was consider putting these men cour prayer list and pray specifically one of them each day. They will be ones deciding which bills live and nich bills die. Immense pressure is leady being placed on them from prayers to help them do what is got and honorable.

But can we realistically expect for it to be a "new day and better in every way?" Ecclesiastes 1.9 states, "What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun." (NIV) Most consider the Teacher and author of Ecclesiastes to be King Solomon,

perhaps the wisest man the world has ever known. His take on life from a purely physical and secular view was that it all is meaningless. His view was totally horizontal, under the sun. It is my prayer and hope that our elected men and women will look vertically, above the sun, for Divine wisdom and direction.

However, I do not expect it to be new and better in every way. There are external factors and circumstances that often determine what can and cannot be done. The fact is that money is scarce and unemployment is high. Our educational system is struggling to produce positive results all across the board. The number of teenage pregnancies and single parent households remain extremely high. Household income is still among the lowest in the nation. Are you beginning to get the picture?

I liken the task of our legislative body to

I liken the task of our legislative body to that of a man, who is given a shovel and pick axe, and then assigned the task of going into the Pearl River swamp and building a grand hotel. This hotel must accommodate every Mississippian in the finest of fashion with every possible convenience. Impossible! It is even more impossible for one legislative session to make every thing new and better in our beloved state.

Of course, to build such a hotel in a swamp would mean digging down, finding a solid foundation and starting there. It is my hope for this legislative session that these men and women, elected by you and me, will be willing to bypass all that has not worked, stop throwing money into bottomless holes, then finding new and better ways of doing things. This will not be popular but it is needed for the future of our state.

This year the legislative session will be 120 days in length due to the start of

a new four-year cycle. Also, there are forty-seven new faces at the capitol, thirty-five new Representatives and twelve new Senators. These first few weeks will be used to get everyone acclimated and committees appointed. Therefore, there are very few bills to report on at this time. But the CAC is aware of a few bills that are being written which will be submitted later in the session.

For years we have supported a bill called the "Child Protection Act." It will be on the docket again this year and hopefully will get a fair hearing. Its aim is to cut down on teenage pregnancy by enforcing the statutory rape laws of Mississippi. There will be some bills aimed at strengthening existing pro-life legislation. Of course, there will be many others of interest and we will keep you informed. Please, in the days ahead, go to our web site at www.christianaction.com and you will find these bills listed. You can always call us at 601-292-3329 (1-800-748-1651 toll free) and speak to us personally about any bill related to the work and interest of the CAC.

Porter can be contacted at 601-292-3332 or at jporter@christianaction.com.



Porter

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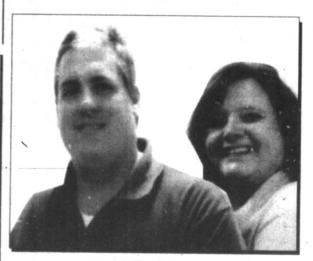
#### JUST FOR THE RECORD

- First Church, Vicksburg, exceeded their Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal by ziving \$39,006.60. Connie Tanner, WMU director.
- Noshoba Church, Union, will be hosting The Singing Echoes in concert Feb. 4, 7 p.m. A love offering will be received.
- Main Street Church, Goodman, will host Dianna Ainsworth Jan. 29, 6 p.m. Ainsworth's
- son, Cade, was diagnosed with cancer and given a less than 40% chance of survival, and is now cancer free. She will be sharing testimony of how prayer healed Cade.
- Damascus Church, Flora, will have a 5th Sunday singing Jan. 29, 5:30 p.m., including Beau Grantham, the FBC Flora youth praise and worship team and puppet team, followed by a chili supper.

#### STAFF CHANGES

- Parkway Church, Hernando, called Steven Simon as youth minister June, 2011. He and his wife Michelle have one daughter, Ashley.
- 2. Moselle Memorial Church, Moselle, has called Stephen M. Taylor as youth director/associate pastor. He comes with his wife, Laura. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Southern Mississippi and is working on his Master of Divinity degree with New Orleans Seminary. He held an internship with Hattiesburg Community Church and student minister with Laurel Freedom Church.





1. The Simons



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## BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE Giving in a Greedy Culture Deuteronomy 15 & 24

By Burn Page

One of my favorite Christmas movies is Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol. The story cen-ters around Ebenezer Scrooge, a miserly old man who hoarded his money and never shared it with anyone. He didn't use his wealth to help the poor; he paid meager wages to his faithful employee; he didn't even allow employee; he didn't even allow himself to live a comfortable life. In essence, Ebenezer wasn't holding his money; his money was holding him!

Rising unemployment has created dire needs among many families and individuals. In our lesson for this week, the biblical writer is reminding us that we have an obligation to meet the needs of people our culture would prefer to ignore. Moses commanded the sraelites to help their fellow Israelites who were in need

than being rather tightfisted. I am writing this lesson on what is called "Black Friday," the big shop-

Friday," the big shopping day after
Thanksgiving. While the day may be described as an opportunity to indulge in selfish consumerism, it also could be said that people are looking for the best deals so they can give more gifts to their spouses, children, and grandchildren. Instead of being "tightfisted" they are being "openhanded."

Moses wanted the Israelites to be openhanded to their fellowman who was not only

lowman who was not only their neighbor but was also their brother. Debt in biblical times was rarely due to irresponsible spending. It was caused by unavoidable cir-cumstances like a crop failure or the sudden death of a hardworking husband. Children



could be sold to pay off debt and, therefore, a widow would be bereft not only of her husband but her children as well.

The Sabbatical year of release was commanded in Exodus 23:10-11 and Leviticus 25:1-7. While these verses stated that the land was to lie fallow without any crops planted, they did not

being planted, they did not mention the cancellation of debts. Some commentators argue that the debt or debt payment would be canceled only for that year since they would not be able to raise crops and have the money to pay. Most likely, however, the cancellation was total and complete.

Four reasons are given why creditors are to be generous to their fellow Israelites:

(1) They must remember od's kindness. Moses God's God's kindness. Moses reminded Israel that God owns the land and that it was theirs mere! v as a trust (Lev. 25:23).

They must obey God's word. This was not an exhortation; it was an order. The Lord

had kept his part of the covenant by giving what he agreed (promised); they must keep theirs by doing what he said (Brown).

(3) They must trust God's promise. This was directed to the creditor for he would have to act in faith and trust God to take care of him if he did not collect on his loans to others.

(4) They must love God's people. Relationships are important. The unfortunate debtor was also an Israelite and a brother and not to be

and a brother and not to be viewed as an enemy.

Stingy people in the Hebrew community were told to avoid four dangers — a hard heart, a closed hand (v.7), an evilthought (v.9), and a grudging spirit (v. 10). So this lesson is a priority check for all of God's children. Do our actions reflect children. Do our actions reflect the concern and compassion of our Father? How do we respond to the homeless, the beggar, and the immigrant? We should always treat oth-ers with dignity and especially those who have suffered from

unavoidable circumstances. In our text, when a creditor made

a loan, he could require a pledge (collateral) in case the oan was not paid. However, he was not to go into the poor man's house and choose what that pledge would be. The bor-rower took the initiative to determine his pledge, and in doing so, his dignity was pre-served. If the debtor should offer his coat as a pledge the creditor was to return it at sundown so it could be used as a blanket for warmth.

Let us remember that we are but freed slaves who stand in eternal debt to our Lord. By his grace and mercy, he has released us (set us free) so let released us (set us free) so let us show grace and mercy to people in low places when we have been blessed to live in high places. If we don't they may appeal to the Lord against us (v. 9), and we will be found guilty of sin. Consequently, we may find ourselves looking up to people to whom we once looked down!

Page is chair of the Department of Christian Studies and Philosophy at Mississippi College and a member of First Chur..., Clinton.

### EXPLORE THE BIBLE Be Passionate

Deuteronomy 6:4-14; 7:6-9

By Melleen Moore

Being passionate is a strong desire to complete or accomplish a given task or event. To be passionate to know and serve God is an awesome undertaking. The beauty of that undertaking is it is also God's desire for every believer, as well. In our recent Sunday School lessons from Jeremiah, attention was given to Jeremiah's daily words from the Lord.' Being passionate to converse daily with God keeps Him in the forefront of our thoughts and actions. Moses' desire was to reaffirm the laws of God while reminding the Israelites of His mercy and goodness.

**Love That Shows Priority** Deuteronomy 6:4-9

As Moses prepared the Israelites to cross over Jordan

into the Promised Land of Canaan, the laws of God and obe-dience to them needed to be on their minds.

Moses was concerned that the children of Israel remain faithful and obedient in the future generations. They were to establish a pattern for listening to God beginning with loving God first, knowing and thinking on the command-ments, teaching them to the children and living them daily. The faithful Jew would repeat the Sheme (verses four-six) twice daily beginning with —
"Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deuteronomy 6:4, NKJV). They were called to love the Lord with their whole being heart, soul and strength in a pure response of understand-ing leading to obedience. To sit, walk and lie down and rise



Moore

up sounds like exercise and that is exactly what it was. Moses stressed to live the commandments and teach them to the children as a truly spiritual exercise. The Lord and His commandments were to be talked as a part of everyday conversation. Literally, having the words written on the

hands, forehead or on the door post would be an outward expression of God's promise. However, it did not replace the need for God's law in the heart of man. With God's love in top priority, a natural response would be to talk about God as Lord with family and friends everywhere.

**Devotion That Never Forgets** 

Deuteronomy 6: 10-14 Moses was nearing the end of his life and had some important words for the children of Israel. They were to remember the Lord had brought them out of slavery to a bountiful land and to fear and worship God alone. He continuously reminded the Israelites that the Promised Land that waited on the other side of the Jordan River was a gift from God. They were to embark on the land with faith and trust. The large and beautiful cities, the houses full of good things, the water wells, the vineyards and olive trees - none of these had the children of Israel worked to produce. This bountiful life of God's promise was for their pure enjoyment. They were warned that it is easy to forget the Lord in prosperity. Therefore, an oath to fear the Lord and serve Him would further prepare them for the encounter they were facing. The Israelites are reminded of idols and temptations that would be all around them. However, with hearts of devotion and obedience, God would reign supreme.

Grace That's Undeserved

Deuteronomy 7: 6-9 God chose Israel as His people. He had a covenant rela-tionship with them beginning with Abraham, Isaac, and

Jacob. That covenant of love and obedience was to be and obedience was to be passed down to each generation. "For you are a holy people to the Lord your God," (Deuteronomy 7: 6a, NKJV). The 'holy people' were described as set apart, a special treasure, and above all other peoples. The children of Israel were experiencing God's were experiencing God's goodness and grace. The Lord had chosen to love these peo-ple 'for Himself' and expected their obedience according to the covenant. "If you love Me, keep My commandment" the covenant. If you was willing to keep His covenant of mercy for generations to come. The children of Israel had been spared by the mighty hand of God and now God was ready to give them the land of promise. We, as believers, are to be passionate about our relationship with God as He chose to love and redeem us 'unto Himself,' even though we as sinners do not deserve it.

Moore is a member of Macedonia

## Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events take place in cooperating churches of

the Mississippi Septist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inct paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All arti-cles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an email form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, alone with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if

submitted as a JPEG file via either e-mail, CD or DVD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items are generally not publishable. Photographs can not be returned. Please do not attach photos with tape or staples.

All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

## TUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto



2. Hardy Church, North Central Association



3. River Bend Church, Aberdeen



5. Moore ordination

- 1. The preschool children of Calvary Church, Bogue Chitto, presented Hooray for Baby Javs. Danny Creel, music director; Hal Hatten, past at. Shown are the participants.
- 2. Hardy Church, North Central Association, recognized those members who had perfect attendance in Sunday School in 2011. Shown are Randy and Suzanne Smith, and Guy E. Smart, who has had perfect attendance for four years.
- 3. The widows of River Bend Church, Aberdeen, were honored with a luncheon Jan. 12, with special guest Lynn Pigford as Bro. Shipper Thigpen. Shown are the participants.
- 4 The children's ministry of Raymond Road Church, Jackson, raised \$579 for their mission project in response to a challenge presented to them during their week at CentriKid. This effort served as proof that the theme from camp, God Provides, is true no matter where you are. Cindy Sansing, minister of children.
- 5. Hebron Church, Meridian, ordained Jimmy Moore as deacon on Jan. 8. Shown are former pastor Tommy Jones, Ann Moore, Moore, and pastor Richard Wallace.
- 6. New Hope Church, Foxworth, gave perfect attendance pins for Sunday School for the year 2010-11. Shown are B.B. Stringer, 56 years; Jimmy Thomas, 42 years; Chase Clark, 15 years; Sherrell Magee, 30 years; Nancy Thomas, 25 years; Kristie Smith, 14 years; and Dillon Smith, seven years.



Church in Plano, Texas, Gene Wilkes, will be the guest speaker at the Evangelism Lectures at Mississippi College February 6-7. The Evangelism Lecture on February 6 begins at 7 p.m. in Provine Chapel and the public is invited. For more information on MC's Evangelism Lectures, contact Burn Page at (601) 925.3292 or Linda Street at (601) 925.3218.



6. New Hope Church, Foxworth



## A New Era in Behavioral Health.

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### STAFF CHANGES

- New Hope Church, Walnut Grove, ordained Michael Harper as their new pastor Jan. 15. Participating pastors include, from left, John Sharp, Joe Able, Harper, Shane McGivney, and Dave Dowdy.
- 2. First Church, Brooklyn, has called Kyle Jones as pastor. Jones will begin his pastorate on January 22nd. Jones is originally from Lamar county and has served in churches there and in Forrest, Jackson, Pearl River and Stone counties before coming to Brooklyn. He received his education from Pearl River Community College, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and the University of Southern Mississippi.